

Mimicking the Historical Landscapes – Vegetation-based Stormwater Management Systems

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The presentation on urban conservation will focus on efforts to create functional urban landscapes. We talk about the agricultural lands as “working lands”. Urban lands should work for us too.

Functional urban landscapes can address many natural resource related concerns, but the primary focus will be on creating “water smart” urban landscapes that function as green stormwater management systems. The model for creating water smart landscapes is the native ecosystems of the tallgrass prairie region. The premise of the model is that the historic landscapes and vegetative communities of Iowa absorbed and infiltrated most rainfall and shed very little runoff. By absorbing and infiltrating rainfall, water quality can be improved and flooding reduced.

Landscaping with native plants is a key aspect of creating water-smart landscapes. Designing, installing, and maintaining native vegetation in an urban setting will be discussed, along with other aspects of creating hydrologically functional urban lands.

Applicability of these concepts for rural and agricultural landscapes will also be discussed.